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FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES

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Losing a loved one is challenging and with grief comes responsibilities like writing an obituary or death notice. Which one should you write and what are the differences between the two?

An obituary differs from a death notice in that it's more personal. It's written as a form of tribute to the deceased. A death notice is a public service announcement informing people of someone's passing.



What is an Obituary?

An obituary is a written announcement telling people someone has passed away and includes details about the deceased. Think of an obituary as a tribute to their life, family, and accomplishments.

When writing an obituary, you will need to include information like:

- The date of death
- Details about the funeral or memorial. This will include the date, time, and any special requests from the family or the deceased.
- A summary of their life. This can include accomplishments, a list of friends or family, and photos.
- Thanks to certain people or donations received.

There is no right or wrong way to write an obituary for your loved one. This holds true for how long the content should be and when to post it. There is no set time to post the obituary, but it is recommend that you post it within a week of your loved one's passing and with enough time before the funeral or memorial.

You can share your written obituary online on websites and social media while using traditional channels like newspapers, church newsletters, and alumni publications.

What is a Death Notice?

A death notice is a short announcement to the public informing them of a person's passing. It's usually a general notice with just a few sentences.

When writing the death notice, you should include the following information:

- The full name of the deceased

- Date of death
- Details about the funeral or memorial

There is no right or wrong time to share it. However, you may want to wait at least 24 hours to allow the family to process the passing before notifying the public.

You can post the death notice online on websites or social media, and in newspapers and newsletters.

Obituary vs. Death Note Differences

While they have some similarities, key differences exist between an obituary and a death notice.

Purpose

While both the notice and obituary share the news of your loved one's passing, the death notice is more of a general service announcement. An obituary is more than that. It's a tribute to the person's life. It typically includes more personal details about the deceased and is a way of honoring them. Examples of personal details to include in an obituary are stories, hobbies, passions, and personal characteristics.

Content

The death notice only includes facts about the deceased. It typically has the who, when and where. It's between three and five sentences at most. The obituary is a much longer announcement. It includes a short biography of the deceased with an average length of around 200 words.

You can choose to include interesting facts about your loved one. These include their membership in clubs or groups, a religious organization, and even something they enjoyed, like cooking or a hobby. Some people write about the deceased person's character or share wisdom they learned from them.

It's worth noting the obituary should be respectful to the deceased person.

Tone

Death notes have more of a formal and neutral tone, as they are just an announcement accompanied by facts. The tone for an obituary has a lot more options. You may want to choose a tone that captures your loved one's essence. It could be light, humorous, reflective or even a somber, more honest tone.

Cost

Obituaries cost more since they often include a picture of the deceased and more words. Death notes are less expensive and, in some cases, free. Expect to pay at least \$350-\$800 for an obituary in most cases. However, an obituary may sometimes be free when published online or in certain community newspapers offering complimentary obituary services.

Obituary vs Death Notice Similarities

There are some common features between an obituary and a death notice.

Announcement of Passing

Both an obituary and death note share the news of a loved one's passing. They are typically shared within a week of the deceased passing.

Funeral Details

The funeral details are similar in an obituary and death notice, as they include the service's date, time and location. An obituary may include a little bit more information on the service, like what guests should bring or wear.

Publication

Both the obituary and a death notice are published in the same places. These include newspapers, websites, church newsletters, and social media.

Death notices and obituaries are not just limited to newspapers and newsletters from where the deceased was from. You can share these notices to places where they spent a lot of time and even where they went on vacation.

Respectful Intent

A death notice is more factual, but it will also use a respectful tone like an obituary. Both of these are also typically serious in nature to respectfully acknowledge the passing of the loved one.

How to Choose Between an Obituary and Death Notice

There are some factors to consider to help you make your choice. Consider things like privacy. You may want to use a death notice if the family prefers a more intimate and private funeral or memorial. Sometimes, when unusual or uncomfortable reasons cause a death, family members want privacy. Other times, if the deceased was very involved in their community, an obituary is a better choice as you can share the life they had.

Cost is key, too. If you're seeking to keep the costs low, a death notice is generally a less expensive option as there are fewer words to publish.

You can also opt to publish both an obituary and a death notice. For instance, if you're looking for a way to pay homage to the deceased and send out an open invitation to the funeral or memorial, both make sense.

FAQs

Is it disrespectful not to have an obituary?

If the family members want to keep their privacy surrounding the details of the death, it's not considered disrespectful. Also, if the deceased was estranged from the family, a death notice is often chosen over an obituary.

How do you end a death notice?

Many people end the notice with information about the funeral or memorial service. This could be a date, time and location, or a specific instruction to the public.

What information should you never include in an obituary?

For safety and security reasons, do not put the physical address of where the deceased lived or the full names of their survivors. Identity theft is a major concern when sharing personal information with the public. To stay safe, use first names only.



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